

Michael's designs on dinner

Double Michelin-starred chef Michael Caines returned to his old college in the South West to help launch a new kitchen he helped to design.

Michael, a regular on television cookery shows who lost his right arm in a car accident 20 years ago, also treated students, staff and governors at Exeter College to a cooking masterclass.

Assistant principal Iain Hatt said: "Michael not only helped us design these first-class facilities, but also provides the inspiration and watchful eye for our Michael Caines Academy students."

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Michelin-starred chef Michael Caines with students, staff, governors and other guests in Exeter College's new skills kitchen

Ambitious indy plans raise prospect of new college

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Ambitious plans to become an incorporated FE college and develop new sites across the country have been revealed by Essex-based charity Prospects Learning Foundation.

The independent learning provider (ILP), which has a current Skills Funding Agency allocation of £2.6m and already brands itself as Prospects College, has launched a consultation on plans to get FE college status.

Chief executive Neil Bates told *FE Week* he hoped the move would unlock government money and allow it set up new bases — potentially competing with existing colleges.

He said: "We are looking for FE college status to support very specialist, sector-focused provision, primarily apprenticeships and workforce development, where employers play a central part in the running of the facility and influence both the curriculum and the quality of what is delivered to make sure it meets the needs of their industry."

Mr Bates added: "Our ambitions beyond Essex and beyond what we have done here is to try to replicate this model across the country because in many locations there are big gaps where there is not this kind of technical vocational provision."

"Our belief as a company is that as the government tries to rebalance the economy there is going to be a problem in terms of there not being the infrastructure through facilities like this to meet the demand."

It could be the first new FE college in more than 20 years, but comes just weeks after the government separately unveiled proposals for a new FE college to train engineers for HS2.

And it appears the government has amended its position on who could run the HS2 college, having previously said it was expected to be a wholly new institution — not an existing ILP.

Mr Bates said it was "too early" to speculate about who would run the new HS2 college, as unveiled by the Department for Transport (DfT) and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), but said it would make sense for Prospects, which has an Education Funding Agency contract worth £715k, to be involved.

He said he would be "very keen" to talk to Ministers about running the college with his charity, which has around 250 staff, 2,000 students and a turnover of £11m last year, specialising in training engineers for the rail and aviation industry across some of its five bases. And his proposals already include plans for a rail academy.

"As I understand it, what the government announced in terms of HS2 is that there is going to be a specialist FE college in order to support the skills needs for the development," said Mr Bates.

He added: "We believe that what we are proposing in terms of the new FE college is compatible with the new college for HS2."

Prospects' announcement, predicted by *FE Week* last year, also comes after it was rated good in its first Ofsted inspection.

The education watchdog praised growing numbers of successful apprentices and "out-

standing visionary leadership".

Colleges were incorporated in April 1993 primarily to remove funding from local government and keep down council tax bills while refocusing public-funded education on employer needs.

A Department for Business, Innovation and Skills spokesperson said Prospects could not be ruled out as the HS2 college provider.

He added: "We support the establishment of new colleges to allow new entrants who offer greater choice and diversity, and drive up quality, customer focus and responsiveness."

Visit prospectsconsultation.com to take part in the consultation, which ends on February 17.

See feweek.co.uk for a full Q&A on the proposals with Neil Bates.

Are you considering incorporation?
Is your independent learning provider aiming to be the first new college since 1993?

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Top apprentice wage tweets:



@Streetkleen

Mortified to learn that the national minimum wage for apprentices is £2.68 per hour. £2.68!!!! Costs almost £4 to catch a bus!!



@IanPlaysMusic

£7 an hour minimum wage means nothing if apprentices can still be paid £2.68 an hour & interns are free #nmw



@LemOnKing

The national minimum wage for apprentices is stupidly low, £2.68 an hour



@AmyLouJones4

National minimum wage may increase to. £7 odd.....National minimum wage 4 apprentices should increase to £6 at least.. #money #wages #wales



@tomcmmiller

Would prefer to see huge a rise in the National Minimum Wage for Apprentices. £2.68 an hour is an insult to young people in their first job

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Wage 'crackdown' questioned

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A government "crackdown" on apprentice minimum wage offenders has been queried with more than one-in-five apprentices not getting paid the legal amount.

Labour MP Julie Hilling put the statistic to Employment Relations Minister Jenny Willott (pictured) in the House of Commons, pushing the Lib Dem MP about what action the government was taking to enforce the £2.68 an-hour minimum wage for apprentices.

"It is worrying that the proportion of apprentices not receiving the minimum wage has increased to more than one-in-five," said Ms Hilling during a Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) questions session on Thursday (January 23).

The apprenticeships pay survey in 2012, published in October, found that 29 per cent of learners had not received the then legal minimum of £2.65 an-hour, a jump of 45 per cent on the year before.

Ms Willott said the government was "concerned" by the number of employers breaking the law, and that it had "zero tolerance" for offenders.

She said: "We have introduced a range of enforcement measures to crackdown on rogue employers. Since June 1, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs [HMRC] has been prioritising complaints about non-payment on the national minimum wage.

"We also started an awareness campaign in November targeting schools and college so most young people starting apprenticeships

are aware of what they're entitled to."

She further pointed to a letter from Skills Minister Matthew Hancock, sent out from October, to all learners at the beginning of their apprenticeship, informing them of the minimum wage.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has also pledged it will soon start naming and shaming employers who do not pay the national minimum wage, either for apprentices or for non-apprentice employees.

In his evidence to the Low Pay Commission, published last week, Business Secretary Vince Cable said it was hoped such negative publicity would deter employers from underpaying employees.

He said: "We are expecting to start naming employers early this year."

Such employers would be the first named since a new scheme came in at the beginning of October.

Dr Cable said: "Under the original scheme, employers had to meet one of seven criteria plus a financial threshold before an employer could be referred to BIS from HMRC for naming.

"The revised scheme has removed these restrictions."

The government had been criticised for failing to ensure all job adverts on the National Apprenticeship Service vacancy matching website showed the new minimum wage.

It was only last month — three months after the increase had come into force — that the system was amended to stop jobs adverts below the minimum wage.



Elmfield investigation 'frustrates' MP

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An ongoing official investigation into defunct provider Elmfield has "frustrated" Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee chair Adrian Bailey (pictured), who said he was waiting to probe the firm's dealings.

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) had been looking into the provider's business even before it went into administration in November owing £11m.

It went under amid allegations of apprenticeship malpractice, with Mr Bailey having already revealed plans to call former Elmfield director Ged Syddall and SFA finance director Paul McGuire for a "no-holds-barred" grilling by the committee.

However, he told FE Week his inquiry was being delayed by the wait for the conclusion

of the SFA investigation — but he warned he may yet push ahead regardless.

"I am quite irritated and frustrated by the lack of progress by the SFA with this and if necessary



the committee will now consider going ahead before publication of the report," he said.

It would be the second time Mr Syddall has appeared before Mr Bailey's committee. He gave evidence in April 2012, when he said Elmfield's entire income of £30m in 2011/12 came from public funds. He also defended his own £3m company dividend. But a BBC Newsnight probe screened in October last year, supported with information uncovered by FE Week, put Elmfield back in the spotlight, over its dealings with workers at supermarket giant Morrisons.

It was alleged Elmfield signed Morrisons staff up to apprenticeship programmes they had declined, enabling the provider to claim public funding for training. A separate probe into the allegations was launched around three months ago by the SFA, but it was still unable to confirm a date for when its findings would be published.

An SFA spokesperson said: "Our investigation into Elmfield is due to be finalised imminently and the results can be shared shortly, once we have formally considered the final report."

Following administration, the majority of Elmfield's business and assets were sold to EQL Solutions Ltd, which is 100 per cent owned by CareTech Holdings plc. The deal is understood to have saved 300 jobs. A CareTech spokesperson said the acquisition was completed as part of a "pre-pack insolvency" of

FE Week news in brief
College finance worries

At least half a dozen sixth form colleges have been given inadequate financial health grades by the Education Funding Agency since 2008/09, it has been revealed.

One such grading was given out every academic year apart from 2009/10, when two colleges' finances were deemed inadequate.

The figures, which come up to 2012/13, were revealed in a written parliamentary answer by Skills Minister Matthew Hancock, who did not disclose the names of the colleges.

ETF chief bows out

Interim chief executive of the Education and Training Foundation, Peter Davies will step down from the role today.

Mr Davies led the organisation's steering group from its inception as the FE Guild to its launch on August 1.

He took up the baton as interim chief executive a month later when the original temporary post-holder Sir Geoff Hall suddenly resigned.

Meet the new chief executive David Russell next week, in our supplement on the foundation.

Website sale goes cold

The £35m sale of online FE directory Hotcourses has fallen through after the terms of the deal could not be agreed with buyer Inflexion Private Equity.

Hotcourses also holds the contract for the National Careers Service's online course directory and the contract was expected to be sold with rest of the company.

The deal could have netted £17m for Heath Secretary Jeremy Hunt who owns a 49 per cent of the company.

Elmfield for a total "cash consideration" of £1.5m. The Morrisons contract was sold to NCG (formerly Newcastle College Group), which saved the remaining 50 jobs at the company.

A statement of the company's affairs later submitted to the High Court of Justice revealed it owed £11m. It was in debt to more than 180 firms, including provider Skillsfirst Awards which was set up by Mr Syddall and owed £863,550.

A spokesperson for the company said Mr Syddall no longer had any involvement in either the running or day-to-day finances of Skillsfirst and hadn't for some time.

Alan Clay, from provider A14 Training which was owed £8,720, said: "We have been working well with EQL since they took over the contract and they have been extremely co-operative, but the original Elmfield debt is still outstanding."

The SFA spokesperson said: "We took action to respond to the situation as soon as it was notified that Elmfield Training was in administration. It would not have been appropriate for the agency to take action prior to the provider's declaration of insolvency."

"A provider that contracts directly with the agency retains ultimate responsibility for all aspects of provision it is contracted to deliver, including elements that it chooses to subcontract."

Ofsted issues warning over ‘misleading’ tweet

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Ofsted is set to warn the boss of a London-based subcontractor to remove a Twitter post that wrongly suggested her firm had received a “successful” visit from the education watchdog.

Krissy Charles-Jones (pictured), chief executive of Bright Assessing, tweeted on December 12 last year to thank her team for “such a successful Ofsted”.

And the homepage of the provider’s website, at the time of going to press, also stated: “Graded ‘good with outstanding features’ — inspected December 2013” (pictured).

There was a further message that read: “Assessor training graded as ‘outstanding’ under Ofsted standards — December 2013”.

But the firm has not been inspected by Ofsted and, as a subcontractor, would not be fully inspected.

It had, in fact, hired Portsmouth-based private contractor Prospect Consultants to carry out an inspection based on Ofsted guidance.

A spokesperson for Bright said it had “no intention whatsoever to mislead anyone” with the postings. “Hence we have published the full report on our website — including the logo and the company letterhead of the consultants concerned,” he said.

However, Ofsted told *FE Week* that a letter

would be sent to Bright asking for the tweet and any misleading messages on the firm’s website to be taken down.

“As with every other occasion when there is a potential misrepresentation of our name, or misuse of the Ofsted logo, we write to the organisation of individual concerned to clarify our position,” she said.

Ms Charles-Jones has amended her account since the offending tweet — which stated: “BIG thank you to Bright team for such a successful Ofsted this wk” — so that only confirmed followers can read her postings.

The Bright spokesperson said: “We are not subject to any mandatory or regulatory inspection by a government body or otherwise, so the only option open to us was to commission an inspection at our own initiative and expense.

“We specifically sought someone who was very familiar with the Ofsted framework, as they are a set of standards with which many of our learners are familiar, and they were instructed to use those terms of reference throughout.”

He added: “We tried to make the inspection as ‘real’ as possible for our staff and, with that in-mind, the team at Bright was informed at very short notice that an Ofsted inspection was being conducted — the day before the inspector arrived.

“This is why, on a Twitter account, a message of thanks to our staff was circulated thanking them for their cooperation with



the ‘Ofsted inspection’ and it was only after the process had been completed that we made everyone aware that this had been an inspection conducted by consultants using the Ofsted framework rather than by Ofsted themselves.”

It comes after *FE Week* reported in November that Bright, which provides qualifications for unemployed people who want to re-enter the workplace, was being investigated by NCFE (formerly the Northern

Council for Further Education) for a second time.

The provider had boasted a pass rate of between 95 per cent and 100 per cent.

The claim no longer appears on its website, but the firm is still being investigated over learners’ claims that courses were substandard.

The Skills Funding Agency and Ofqual are being kept informed about the investigation, which is expected to conclude shortly.

Vocational quals in a league of their own

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For the first time FE league tables have been released separately, listing institutions’ performance in academic and vocational qualifications.

The tables, published by the Department for Education on Thursday (January 23), have met with a mixed response from the sector.

While some have welcomed the distinction between the two qualification types at level three, others have expressed concerns that it could “create a hierarchy of qualifications”.

Of the colleges listed, Hills Road Sixth Form College, in Cambridge, and Middlesbrough’s Cleveland College of Art and Design were among the top performers for A-levels, with

the highest average points score per entry each getting an average of a B and B- respectively).

Doncaster College was bottom of the list for A-levels, with an average points score equivalent to an E.

In vocational qualifications, Runshaw College, Cardinal Newman College, Esher College, Stockton Sixth Form College, Barton Peveril Sixth Form College, Reigate College and Havant College were top of the list, all boasting an average point score per entry of a distinction*.

The lowest scoring college for vocational qualifications was South Thames

College, although it still averaged a merit .

Association of Colleges policy director Joy Mercer said: “This data is new and needs careful analysis.

“There is a strong performance among small selective sixth forms but we’re also delighted to see a number of larger colleges achieving high average grades despite a larger number of students.”

Dr Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), said she was not in favour of publishing the performance table as separate lists.

She said: “It sends the wrong message to pupils, parents and schools about what is important.

“Academic and vocational qualifications are of equal value, should be held in equally high esteem and treated as equal in a unified reporting system.

“All 16 to 19-year-olds need vocational skills irrespective of what subjects they are studying, and they all need the option of studying both academic and vocational subjects.

“We are also unhappy about some vocational qualifications being labelled ‘applied general’ and some

‘tech level’ as we fear this will create a hierarchy of qualifications.

“There should be a single set of characteristics and expectations that define high quality vocational education, whether the qualification is designed to provide work skills or enable students to study further.”

However, Malcolm Trobe (pictured), deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said the separate tables would create “parity of esteem” and that vocational qualifications “need to be recognised” as “different”.

“Separate tables are helpful because trying to create equivalences between vocational and academic qualifications does not work,” he said.

“What is important is that vocational qualifications are accepted as equally important and the most appropriate route for many young people.”

However, he was critical of the lack of explanatory information provided with the data.

“Raw data does not tell the full story, it can only help to identify the questions that might be asked,” he said.

Mrs Mercer agreed, saying: “It is disappointing the DfE has once again published the tables without any commentary to put them in context.

“Their complexity makes them difficult for parents and students to understand and doesn’t allow them to use the tables to answer the simple questions, such as ‘which local school or college should I go to if I want to do a particular job.’”







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Baker ‘delighted’ as Gove green light means UTCs hit 50 mark

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The number of University Technical Colleges (UTCs) is set to hit 50 after six more of the institutions offering vocational education to 14 to 18-year-olds got the go-ahead from the Department for Education (DfE).

The newly-announced UTCs will be located in Bolton, Peterborough, Scunthorpe and Warrington, with two in London.

The colleges were the brainchild of former Education Secretary Lord Baker (pictured), and offer a mixture of academic study, including maths, English, science, foreign language, history and geography, alongside a technical curriculum geared towards a particular industry. They are run through a partnership between local universities, FE colleges and employers.

Lord Baker said: “This announcement shows continued support and commitment from the government to increase the size and impact of the UTC movement. I am delighted UTCs enjoy all-party support.”

He hinted that more could be in the pipeline, with a further round of applications to open UTCs in 2016 closing on May 9.

“Several applications were very close to approval and the DfE has said that they will provide additional support for their reapplications before the next deadline,” he said.

The two new London UTCs will join one in Greenwich, another in Elstree, as well as planned UTCs in Watford, Tottenham, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Heathrow and Dagenham.

Mayor of London Boris Johnson said: “I

Six new UTCs — a guide to where, who, what and how

- Bolton UTC**
Bolton UTC is partnered with Bolton College. It is sponsored by the University of Bolton and supported by employers the Cohens Group and Ravat and Ray Dental Care, with additional partners including Equity Solutions, NHS, Bolton Council, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the North West Engineering Employers Federation. Bolton UTC will specialise in health and engineering technologies, catering for 600 pupils.
- Greater Peterborough UTC**
Based in Peterborough, and led by Peterborough Regional College, this 500-place UTC will specialise in environmentally sustainable engineering and environmentally sustainable technologies in the built environment. It is sponsored by Anglia Ruskin University with employer sponsors including Anglian Water, The Larkfleet Group, and Marshall Aerospace.
- Global Academy UTC**
The London-based Global Academy UTC will cater for up to 800 students and specialise in teaching technical skills for work in the broadcast media industry. It is led by radio group ‘This is Global Ltd’, in partnership with the University of the Arts, London, and the Meller Educational Trust and supported by Universal Music, Arqiva, Clifford Chance, BPI and RCS, Global.
- Humber UTC**
Based in Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire, the Humber UTC is partnered with North Lindsey College as well as North Lincolnshire Council, North Lindsey College and Outwood Grange Academies Trust and is led by the University of Hull. It is supported by Able UK, Tata Steel Europe, Total Lindsey Oil Refinery and Centrica. It will specialise in engineering and renewables and will cater for 600 pupils.
- Sir Simon Milton UTC**
Sir Simon Milton UTC in Westminster will cater for 550 students and specialise in transport engineering and construction. Led by the Sir Simon Milton Foundation, in partnership with the University of Westminster and leading employers such as Network Rail, BT Fleet, Land Securities, TfL and Mace, and Westminster Council.
- Warrington UTC**
Warrington UTC in Cheshire is led by the University of Chester, in partnership with Warrington Borough Council and with support from Sellafeld Ltd, Tenet Consultants, United Utilities, Boulting and AMEC. It will specialise in nuclear engineering and energy engineering, catering for 620 pupils.

welcome the government’s decision to back two new UTCs in London.

“They offer young people the chance to gain important technical skills and the qualifications they will need to compete in a highly competitive jobs market.

“The Sir Simon Milton UTC and the Global Academy UTC will nurture the next generation of home-grown talent going into transport engineering, construction and our fast growing media technology sector.

“These are areas that are vital to London’s continued growth.”

The first UTCs have

been opening over the last two years, and the latest announcement means that nationally, UTCs will potentially have the capacity to take on as many as 30,000 young people.

However, figures released in November showed that some were running at less than 30 per cent capacity.

The 150-pupil Central Bedfordshire UTC was just 30 per cent full for the last academic year, while the 480-pupil Black Country UTC, near Birmingham, was 36 per cent full.

A further three opened at the beginning of 2012/13 but the combined figure for all

five UTCs was still only 57 per cent (825 pupils).

Lord Baker defended the low numbers, saying they would increase.

“What happens is that head teachers of state schools are allocated pupils by the local authority, but we have to go out and get our pupils with marketing,” he said, adding that UTCs had also been increasing their marketing skills.

The Tory peer has also proposed another brand of educational institutions, Career Colleges, which would focus on training students from 14 years old in areas including hospitality, tourism, finance, health and care and construction, but would be based at existing colleges.



Restaurant closure hits apprentice chefs

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More than a dozen apprentice chefs were left stranded with their independent learning provider apparently having gone to the wall.

The Restaurant Academy, in Plymouth, closed suddenly on Friday, January 17, after just three months of operation.

It is understood that a notice was placed in the door last week. It stated that the restaurant was closed, with apologies for “any inconvenience caused”.

Parent company, independent learning provider Synergy Training South West, is reported by the Companies Check website to be meeting with creditors.

The Skills Funding

Agency and City College Plymouth (pictured), which has its own training restaurant, are attempting to contact the 17 affected learners to continue their training. At least five of the apprentices have been contacted by City College Plymouth.

The firm was a subcontractor of K College and Sussex Coast College Hastings. As of November it had contracts worth £55k and £354k with the colleges, respectively.

A K College spokesperson said: “We subcontract a small amount of course delivery to Synergy — of the 17 apprentices affected by the restaurant closure, only two are K College students.

“Since the restaurant closed we’ve spoken directly to our apprentices, the SFA and City College Plymouth to secure and protect our learners and help them to complete their qualifications.”

Sharron Robbie, head of corporate relations at Plymouth, said: “Some of the apprentices are coming into the college to meet with us so we can see where they are in the grand scheme of things, because obviously we don’t know how far they had got with their courses.

“The SFA is also involved and I think there will soon be a more structured plan to make sure they all gain an equal advantage.

“For us it was really important that the young people in the city knew they had options available to them.”

An SFA spokesperson said: “Our priority is to ensure that all the apprentices are able to continue their learning with minimal disruption.

“We working with the lead provider to ensure that the apprentices are able to transfer to alternative providers, as quickly as possible, so that they can continue their apprenticeships.”

The Restaurant Academy training centre received an £80,000 investment from Gavin Jones, the chief executive of Synergy Training South West, according to local press reports.

No one from Sussex Coast College Hastings was available for comment and *FE Week* was unable to contact Synergy Training South West.

Apprentices affected should contact Sharron Robbie at City College Plymouth by email at srobbie@cityplym.ac.uk or by phoning 01752 305896

Rise in out of work 16 to 24s

The number of 16 to 24-year-olds not in work in the UK is up slightly on last year, a monthly report has revealed.

According to the latest labour market statistics released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the number of 16 to 24-year-olds considered to be “economically inactive” rose 1.16 per cent from 2.49 million in the period of September to November 2012, to 2.52 million in the same period last year.

The ONS defines those as economically inactive as being out of work, including those who choose to be — for example, if they are looking after a home or retired.

However, while the figures were down annually, they showed a quarterly rise with 3.68 million 16 to 24-year-olds in employment (22 per cent of whom were in full-time education), up 77,000 from June to August last year.

And overall, the number of people out of work fell by 167,000 to 2.32 million in the three months to November.

A Department for Work and Pensions spokesperson, who would not explain why the number of economically inactive young people had increased, said: “Youth unemployment is falling — there are 114,000 fewer young people claiming Jobseeker’s Allowance than there were in May 2010, a number that has been declining for the last 19 months.”



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What can Ofsted learn from its own complaints system?

Last week, ex-NCG (Newcastle College Group) chief executive Jackie Fisher spoke exclusively to *FE Week* about her notorious 2012 Ofsted inspection.

She explained why she booted the education watchdog out of the college mid-inspection before calling for the Ofsted complaints-handling procedure to become more transparent.

Here, Policy Consortium trio Colin Forrest, Mike Cooper and Carolyn Medlin look deeper into the Ofsted complaints issue.

Over the past six months, we've written about how well or otherwise Ofsted supports improvement in the FE sector, as it claims — and how it might improve its own approaches.

And last week's *FE Week* article, although centred on NCG and its former chief, was underpinned by revealing insights into Ofsted's published inspection complaints system.

In short, there were 35 formal ('Steps 2 and 3') complaints from September 2012 to mid-November 2013 — 29 'Step 2' complaints.

That's around 12 per cent of approximately 250 inspections undertaken over that time — 13 of those (around 5 per cent) were upheld.

At least one produced a significant uplift of grades from 'requires improvement'.

“It was good to read that Ofsted has reviewed its complaints process”

It's not clear what the full spectrum of 'successful outcomes' to complaints has been, but that may include other grade changes, or significant changes to report narratives (without change to grades or judgements).

There is no indication of the scale of informal 'Step 1' concerns about processes.

This proportion of complaints upheld might be seen as relatively minor, and thus acceptable.

Nevertheless, the context of an inspectorate making more and more stringent demands on providers suggests improvement is required here from Ofsted.

And it's so important to get this right.

Apart from damage to reputations, funding may be at stake, since grade three and four providers may be excluded from some provision and growth.

Inspections, of course, can cover only part of a provider's activity — but findings can be seen as applying across the organisation.

One particularly contentious aspect is that reports are published to fixed timescales, even if the process is subject to an appeal or complaint.

The stated procedure suggests this is non-negotiable, apart from in (unspecified) 'exceptional circumstances'.

Anecdotally, this is characterised as



Ofsted's London HQ. Inset from top left: last week's *FE Week* article, Colin Forrest, Mike Cooper and Carolyn Medlin

“Learners and employers have a right to know the truth!”

Ofsted does allow up to 48 hours for an accuracy check, but that is not a test of the findings' validity.

It allows no debate on judgements or grades, since it focuses on spellings, learner numbers, and so on.

There may also be other factors, including the implications of short-notice inspections.

The compressed window for dialogue between lead inspector and provider limits potential for sharing information and

adjustments to the expertise available within the inspection team.

It also compromises opportunities for the provider's input into the pre-inspection briefing. This may increase the potential for more complaints.

It was good to read that Ofsted has reviewed its complaints process.

However, the role of providers (and other 'consumers' of inspectorate outputs) isn't clear in that review.

That is crucial, to reduce dissonance between improvement approaches which the

inspectorate looks for in providers and their treatment of complaints.

Consultancy for Free was the title of an excellent short publication setting out simply and clearly the case for FE providers to make serious, thoughtful use of open, well-constructed, responsive complaints systems – and to generate real improvement from that.

Perhaps Ofsted ought to take those strategic messages about transparency and accountability very seriously, in implementing its review?

Delays in traineeship benefits exemption branded a ‘mess’

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Frustration is growing among providers as they continue to wait for the government to bring in a promised benefits exemption for traineeships.

Nearly two months after Chancellor George Osborne (pictured), in his Autumn Statement, said the programme would be freed from a rule limiting the time learners could take part while claiming, the FE and skills sector is still waiting for the exemption to be enforced.

A start date for the exemption has not even materialised, and documents seen by *FE Week* show that Job Centres are still advising staff to enforce the rule.

An advisory document covering traineeships being given the Job Centre Plus staff as recently as a fortnight ago states “existing benefits rules apply”. It made no mention of the planned exemption.

And now sector leaders have warned the continuation of the rule, which prevents people from claiming job seekers allowance (JSA) if they take on study



or work experience for more than 16 hours a-week, could be affecting the success of the traineeships programme.

Andrea Webb, director of traineeship provider Profile Development and Training, said: “The 16-hour rule is really limiting.

“What most of these learners need is experience of what it’s like to get themselves to work at 9 and stay until 5, day in day out, but you can only have two days like that under the 16-hour rule — leaving no time for training.

“It doesn’t feel like meaningful experience — it’s not fair, it’s disadvantaging young people and it’s putting off employers who want to offer it.”

“It’s very frustrating... the momentum’s gone out of traineeships.”

Peter Cobrin, director of Employment Pathways, described the situation as “a mess”.

“The announcement really



Andrea Webb and Peter Cobrin



hasn’t made any difference at all,” he said.

“The traineeship programme has failed if it doesn’t engage employers — and many of them want young people to take on level two training, which will definitely push them over the 16-hour rule.”

Paul Warner, director of employment and skills at the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said: “The Autumn Statement said explicitly that the government will ensure benefit rules would not impede the take-up of traineeships and that the 16-hour rule would be lifted specifically in relation to study.”

He said early implementation would have helped to improve the uptake of the scheme, which has been much lower than expected.

He added: “The fact that we have not seen

any evidence that the rules are about to change is very frustrating for the providers trying to do their best for young people looking for sustainable employment.

“We have a meeting arranged with officials shortly but are ready to take the matter up with ministers if necessary.”

The Department for Work and Pensions declined to comment, saying it was the responsibility of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

A BIS spokesperson said: “We are working closely with the DWP to make the necessary changes to exempt traineeships from the 16-hour rule.

“We aim to implement these changes as soon as possible and will keep the sector updated on developments.”



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Editor's comment

Brave new college

It's hard to comprehend how there's been no new college in more than 20 years — no incorporation since 1993.

We've seen new colleges born of mergers, for sure, but behind them there will have been market forces at play somehow, whether we like it or not.

It's therefore almost unbelievable that such market forces — in the space of two decades — would not have been best served on at least one occasion by a wholly new college.

So if a revisit to incorporation will benefit learners then it is to be welcomed and Neil Bates' ambitious plans deserve a fair hearing.

And ambitious they certainly do sound. New Prospect sites could be on the horizon and, apparently coincidentally, there's also the possibility of the HS2 college contract.

The confidence underpinning the plans is uplifting, but fortune does not always favour the brave — and neither, arguably, do market forces.

So while Mr Bates' incorporation hopes sound positive, he should also be careful what, or how much, he wishes for.

Farewell Peter

Peter Davies had his encore back in September, when he returned to the Education and Training Foundation for his second stint with a spell as interim chief executive.

Last Friday saw his final bow to the sector in the role and **FE Week** wishes him all the best for the future.

We now look forward to welcoming David Russell to the stage as the foundation's first permanent chief executive.

Chris Henwood, editor
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Correction

There's nothing like being short-changed to prompt that indignant sense of injustice. And unfortunately *FE Week* left readers a few P short last week — although thankfully, no money was involved.

An expert piece submitted by Ruth Sparkes applied the classic business tool of the marketing mix to traineeships.

The tool contains seven Ps, including product and place, calling for consideration of each element.

However, following amendments here, some Ps were missing from the article.

The omissions were evident in the newspaper, but online coverage was corrected within hours of going live.

Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of *FE Week*?

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at news@feweek.co.uk with Corrections in the subject line.



Apprentice loans processed due to ‘comms failure’

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Business Secretary Vince Cable was grilled by MPs over why apprentice FE loans were still being officially advertised and processed despite the policy having been dropped.

He faced questions, along with civil servants Martin Donnelly and Howard Orme, about the loans for apprentices over the age of 24 being scrapped, as exclusively revealed in December by *FE Week*.

During the hearing, Dr Cable promised to investigate the matter, along with what he called a “communications failure” which led to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) continuing to advertise 24+ apprentice loans on its website.

Labour MP Ann McKechin asked why members of the committee had not first heard about the decision to scrap the loans, which are still being processed by the Student Loans Company and advertised on the SFA website, through parliament.

She said: “Our committee staff noticed a reference reported in *FE Week* that you are withdrawing this particular scheme but we were unable to find any statement that you had made to parliament in this regard.

“We only found out simply by chance as a committee. There didn't seem to have been any announcement made to parliament. It seemed to have gone into a newspaper first of all.”

Dr Cable said: “The 24+ loan scheme has worked well, in other words had a very big take-up for most of the training. But in the apprenticeship area there was very little take-up, we concluded that was not working and we decided to cease it. I can certainly try to find out why we did not brief parliament more thoroughly, that's a perfectly fair point.”

Committee chair Adrian Bailey asked Dr Cable: “I understand from *FE Week* that the SFA website is still advertising these loans. There just seems to be some muddling and confusion.

“An announcement which was in *FE Week* that Parliament is not aware of, and the SFA, not exactly an insignificant player in this area, isn't aware of it. What is going on?”

Dr Cable said: “I don't know where the communications failure has occurred, we can investigate that, but certainly it's absolutely right that they should be advertising 24+ loans because that is the policy and it is working. For apprenticeships, it has ceased and we can find out why the message hasn't got through.”

He also defended the government's traineeship programme and said it would help improve apprenticeship numbers in the 16 to 19 age group.

He said: “The figures show that apprenticeships have been expanding quite rapidly for all age groups except 16 to 19 and that almost certainly reflects employer preferences for people who have work experience.

“That's why the apprenticeship reform we are ticking through at the moment is bringing in this concept of traineeships.

“Quite a lot of them are going into formal education. There is obviously a NEETs [Not in Education, Employment or Training] problem we are trying to address in a variety of ways. It is high and it is a worrying social phenomenon. I have seen some figures in the last week or so that show there is some genuine interest in the traineeship model but it's far too early. We can certainly brief you on the figures we have got.”

He added: “Employers find it very difficult to take on teenagers, partly because a worryingly high number do not have English and maths, but also because habits of work have not been established.

“They want people who are ready for work and we have got to create a pathway which traineeships are designed to do.”

Comments

Funding cut report ‘tries to justify the unjustifiable’

This is a shameful ministerial decision taken without the full facts as to which students this will hit the most.

Given the pressure on budgets across the FE sector this cut will, in reality, have negative consequences for all FE students.

The thought that a typical three-year, FE learner journey beginning at 16 with a full level two programme needs less support at 18 shows how little ministers know and understand about the young people working hard to improve their life chances.

Paul

In these lean times most FE colleges are doing well if they are able to make a surplus of 3 per cent. This is not a surplus for the benefit of shareholders, but is generally reinvested back into infrastructure and college improvement.

The conclusion of the impact assessment was that the FE sector would be hit to the tune of a 3 per cent reduction. Therefore the conclusion of the impact assessment is that this will have a destabilising effect on the sector as a whole. This is obvious but has been lost, not mentioned. It is not easy to reign in the costs of delivery for 18-year-olds when they are in the same classes as those aged 16 and 17; their needs are often the same.

Jason

Have you got something to say about FE or one of our stories?

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Adam Lee
student support worker

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Funding questions follow Labour jobseekers' training proposal

@FCDWhittaker

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Proposals to make jobseekers take part in English, maths and IT training to qualify for benefits have been welcomed by FE sector leaders — but there were questions about how the training would be funded.

The idea was announced by Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary Rachel Reeves during a speech to the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) thinktank in London on Monday (January 20).

She said she was unveiling plans for, “a new requirement for jobseekers to take training if they do not meet basic standards of maths, English and IT — training they will be required to take up alongside their job search, or lose their benefits.”

Ms Reeves said there were, “shocking levels of English and maths among too many jobseekers”.

“Research shows that nearly one in five of those who have made multiple claims for unemployment benefits have problems with reading or numeracy,” she said, adding that schools had a “critical role to play”, but that FE was also important for those lacking basic skills.

Her emphasis on FE was welcomed by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) and the Association of Colleges (AoC), but concerns have been raised about an apparent lack of detail on funding.

Dr Mary Bousted, ATL general secretary,

Weston College principal Dr Paul Phillips (front) celebrates Ofsted success with staff and students



Opposite ends but same Ofsted results joy

Two general FE colleges at opposite ends of England have received glowing Ofsted reports.

York College and Weston College, in Somerset, were both rated outstanding following inspections by the education watchdog at the end of last year.

said: “Where will the funding come from to deliver the training and to develop and run the tests to ascertain who needs training?”

“And where will the training take place following the recent cuts in funding for FE colleges which may mean that, by the time this policy is implemented, there aren’t enough college places or FE colleges to provide the training?”

In both cases, the ratings were improvements on gradings of good from preceding inspections. York, with grade one results in every headline field, was praised for success rates and student and apprentice progress. It was rated good or outstanding in most sub-fields, apart from science and

Michele Sutton, AoC president, said: “The work colleges already do with the unemployed is succeeding, but they are working with more people than they are funded for. If Labour wants colleges to work with more benefit claimants, they will need to ensure sufficient funding is available to make it a reality.”

Ms Reeves’ comments came two months after IPPR report No More Neets, the last of

foundation level English, which were both said to “require improvement”.

And Weston College, also with grade one results in every headline field, was outstanding in all subject areas except three – science, motor engineering and business administration and management.

its three reports late last year, called for a ‘youth allowance’ to replace existing out of work benefits for 18 to 24-year-olds.

The report also called for a ‘youth guarantee’ to be established, offering access to FE or vocational training plus intensive support to find work. For those not learning or earning after six months, mandatory paid work experience and traineeships should be provided, it said.

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FE Week profile

Jane Overbury ~ her story

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The principal of one of Inner London’s handful of sixth form colleges talks to *FE Week*.

Dr Jane Overbury says it is “genuinely a surprise” to find herself principal of Inner London’s Christ the King Sixth Form College.

“My ambition has always been around being the best I can at whatever I’m doing, and I have always had just very short-term goals,” says the 55-year-old, who was awarded an OBE for services to education in 2009.

“I didn’t enter the teaching profession to one day see myself as a head.”

The setting of her Roman Catholic college, in bustling, multicultural Lewisham, is a far cry from Kingskerswell — the small Devonshire village where Overbury grew up.

“It was a nice place to grow up, in that we could all play outside on the estate, but as I got older, one of the disadvantages about living in a village is that everybody knows your business,” she says.

“That’s not to say people weren’t lovely, but the older generation all knew who you were and whose family you belonged to, and what your lineage was and so on.”

The turning point for Overbury was passing the 11-plus exam, although once again, it came as a surprise.

“I grew up on a council estate, we weren’t wealthy, and we certainly weren’t prepped for the 11-plus... but anyway, I passed and went to grammar school,” she says.

Even as a child, explains Overbury, she loved learning, but one particular teacher, Sue Pike, “opened [my] eyes to a completely different world”.

“She was absolutely key to making me believe in myself,” says Overbury, the fifth child of seven.

“An absolutely fantastic teacher — she was my English teacher and my drama teacher, but she developed my thinking beyond just the subject knowledge.”

It was through a drama club run by her inspirational teacher that Overbury met best friend Rachel Crone, who attended the local secondary modern school.

“Our two teachers lived together, so we both went to this combined drama club and got to know each other, and then we got to know them very well and throughout sixth form,” she explains.

“It was a time when teachers could take you out to all sorts of places — they were instrumental in opening our eyes to theatre and dance and drama in ways we would never have been able to do otherwise.”

In September 1979, aged 18 and inspired by Ms Pike, Overbury set off for Philippa Fawcett teacher training college in London to qualify as an English and drama teacher, while Rachel went to study catering at Torquay Technical College.

However, shortly after, Rachel came to stay with Overbury in London for the week, got

a job as a babysitter and never went back to Devon.

Overbury smiles warmly as she remembers that period sharing a flat with Rachel.

“It was a house with lots of creatives, and for us two girls from Devon it was a real eye-opener,” says Overbury.

“It was time of the punk scene, so we were living with people who were in punk bands — it was a completely different world.

“We sat on the edge [of the punk scene], Rachel and I — we never did our hair and stuff.”

Sadly, Rachel died of cancer four years ago having become a youth and social worker, but Overbury says she is still in contact with Ms Pike.

It was while at Philippa Fawcett that Overbury met husband Steve when he came to eat at the restaurant she was working in while taking her studies.

Steve is now a layout designer for a magazine, as well as writing books and articles.

“Their sense of contribution to society, their care and concern, their manners — it’s counter to everything we hear about young people, and young people in South East London”

The couple live in Dulwich and have two daughters, Lucy, aged 27, who works in corporate law and Jess, 25, a doctor.

Overbury went on to teach at William Penn boys’ comprehensive school, and briefly flirted with financial journalism at a trade publication in London’s financial district.

“I did that for less than a year, and that confirmed to me teaching was absolutely what I wanted to do,” she says.

She returned to William Penn, moving



into careers advice in the school’s sixth form and through a series of mergers and collaborations found herself in FE at Southwark College.

“Everything in my career has happened by chance — I never planned it out,” she says.

“Then, one day out of the blue, I saw a job advert for the vice principal of Christ the King.

“I thought if I get the job it’s meant to be, and if I don’t then it’s not — and I got the job.”

Overbury’s Catholicism has had an impact on her life, she says.

“What it does for me personally, it gives me a compass and a guide... that sense of having a commitment to something greater and more powerful than me as an individual has been really important in shaping that sense of who I am.”

When the college’s previous principal

stepped aside, 12 years ago, Overbury took over.

She says she’s proud to be where she is and of her PhD in education, for which she studied while one daughter did her A-levels and the other her GCSEs.

“Pride is a very difficult thing for us Catholics,” she jokes.

“Proud suggests it’s my intervention that’s done it in some way — pleased with might be a better word — or happy with. I’m privileged to be principal of this college.”

Her affection for the three-site college, graded as good by Ofsted in 2010, is clear.

“I absolutely love what I do. I think it’s a privilege to work with the staff here,” she says.

“When you work with young people here, they’re amazing — the ambition, and what they will do to achieve what they want to achieve.

“Their sense of contribution to society, their care and concern, their manners — it’s counter to everything we hear about young people, and young people in South East London.”

Unsurprisingly, Overbury says she has no plans for the immediate future, except “getting things right” with the college’s development and expansion.

She has no plans to return to Devon either.

“I’m a city girl, my girls are both city girls, and I absolutely love London,” she says.

“People talk about retiring to the country but I’d like to retire closer to town — a little flat up in town would do me very nicely.”

It’s a personal thing

What is your favourite book?
Lost Empires by J B Priestley. It’s about the decline of music halls. I liked the Hilary Mantel books and Samuel Pepys’s diaries — they were very dense reading but I loved them after I got through them

If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?
Samuel Pepys and Nelson Mandela

What do you do to switch off from work?
I read, I socialise, friends and family, I’ll walk around London sometimes,

museums and art galleries, and sometimes I’ll watch trashy TV

What’s your pet hate?
I don’t really like the idea of hate, but

What did you want to be when you grew up?
I wanted to be a teacher because I wanted to do something where you had qualifications, and you were working in a sort of professional role, and where I grew up the only women I saw doing professional jobs were teachers

FE Week experts

No letting up on England's poor adult literacy and numeracy



Adult literacy and numeracy levels in England came out badly under the scrutiny of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. A parliamentary inquiry was announced this month and David Hughes explains why such a move was necessary.

I am very pleased that the House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee is to hold an inquiry into adult literacy and numeracy.

This recognises how pressing the issue is and is a positive and welcome response to the recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report on adult literacy and numeracy.

The OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) suggested that England's performance lagged behind that of many of its economic competitors.

It is heartening that there is continued cross-party consensus about the importance of adult basic skills; it is less heartening that we are still needing to discuss it and struggling to actually address the scale of the challenge.

There have been many inquiries over the last decade, from the Moser report in 2001 to our own independent inquiries in 2009, chaired by Dame Mary Marsh and Lord Boswell.

These and more have helped move things forward, but the scale of the challenge has swamped the recommendations.

What is clear is that improving adult literacy and numeracy will take a generation; in fact, the problem is made tougher every year when young people leave school with low levels of literacy and numeracy.

So, we can probably all agree that quick fixes are not enough, even though they may be welcome.

The real challenge for us to debate is how we persuade government that investing more money will address the enormous scale of this challenge.

I say this because all of the evidence shows that the large numbers of adults with the most to gain from learning the fundamental skills of literacy and numeracy are the very ones who have missed out from government investment over the last decade.

Providers have been successful in support-

ing people to achieve the formal qualifications which earn the funding. The result of this, though, is that too many people at pre-entry or entry level have been overlooked.

My reading of the situation is that there is a good understanding of this and of the social and economic rationale for investment but there is little confidence that more investment will help those most in need.

The Select Committee inquiry gives us an opportunity to discuss this again and provide ideas and evidence of how increased investment could be used differently to make an impact.

I am hoping to hear about innovative practice, outreach examples and ways to motivate people into learning.

I am also keen to hear about the problems in the funding and regulatory systems which hinder reaching people with the lowest levels of literacy and numeracy.

We have recently started on a pertinent piece of work with the Esmée Fairburn Foundation and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills looking at the development of a broader life skills curriculum, including family learning, delivered as part of a programme of study.

“The real challenge for us to debate is how we persuade government that investing more money will address the enormous scale of this challenge”

The intention is that, with colleges and providers, we can develop a more flexible programme of study which is attractive to adults with low basic skills.

We want to explore how a more flexible offer can attract adults who are not interested in maths or English as a starting point, but who may be attracted to other things such as financial literacy, health, using technology and how to support children in learning.

If we can show that this reaches different people we can make the case for more investment with more flexibility; both would be great, even one of those would be nice.

Our life skills curriculum is just one of the many creative ideas and approaches I am hoping that the Select Committee will hear about, consider and support.

Let's flood them with evidence, passion and ideas and use this as a forum to shift the funding rules and regulations so that we can support people who can gain so much from learning the basic skills.

David Hughes, chief executive, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

Securing education for young offenders — learning first, detention second



The education of young offenders looks set to improve drastically with the government's announcement of Secure Colleges, where the current average of 12 hours a-week learning will double. Toni Fazaeli explains how it might affect FE staff and providers.

We welcome the government's recent proposals to refocus the culture of youth custody from detention to learning.

Secure colleges provide an opportunity for a revolution in the rehabilitation of young offenders, but, as the Prisoner Learning Alliance's latest report, Smart Rehabilitation, clearly highlights, learning provision must be outcome-focused, joined up and value-driven.

Of the very small minority of young people who commit crimes, around 1,300 are cur-

“Young offender institutions deliver, on average, only 12 hours of learning a-week”

rently serving a custodial sentence, almost three-quarters of them in one of Her Majesty's young offender institutions.

Proposals announced by the Ministry of Justice in Transforming Youth Custody seek to gradually replace the current secure youth estate with new secure colleges, while taking measures to improve the quality of education and training and resettlement arrangements for those young people currently in custody.

Young offender institutions deliver, on average, only 12 hours of learning a-week, despite being contracted to deliver 15 hours, and this is set to be nearly doubled to 24 hours under the new proposals.

We have more than 1,500 members who teach in prisons, and our response to the ministry's consultation last year on introducing secure colleges was informed by the views of teachers and trainers directly involved in offender learning.

Despite public expenditure of between £65,000 and £212,000 a-year for each place in young offender institutions, secure training centres and secure children's homes, nearly 75 per cent of young people leaving custody reoffend within one year.

The main difference between secure colleges and existing forms of youth custody will lie in their culture.

Secure colleges are to be places of learning first and detention second. So the decision about who will run secure colleges is an extremely important one — there should be one lead provider overseeing education and custodial functions, as opposed to the current arrangement whereby separate contractors manage these processes.

The winning provider must demonstrate a high-level understanding of effective teaching and learning strategies for the most hard-to-engage young people. We believe that local FE providers should be in the lead.

Teachers and trainers told us that those seeking to run secure colleges, and those preparing to bid for new and renewing Olass (Offenders' Learning and Skills Service) contracts later this year, should major on offering excellent quality teaching and learning.

Significant barriers to improving education and training in youth secure estates currently include lack of access to up-to-date equipment, facilities and resources (even something as basic as internet access), according to almost all (98 per cent) of the respondents.

The key message from our research is that working with young offenders in a teaching and training capacity is a highly specialised role and always involves working with young people who have highly complex emotional, social and learning needs.

This was recognised in the ministry's commitment to a professional qualifications framework for custodial staff who work with young offenders. It is frankly unbelievable, however, that the same commitment was not made to ensuring that there will be qualified, highly skilled and specialist teachers and trainers, given that theirs is such an important role in securing successful outcomes and improved life chances for young offenders.

There are some real practical and systemic issues for policymakers to consider. How accessible is the local college or provider offer for a young person leaving custody? How strong is the relationship with local youth offending teams? On average, most young offenders spend 110 days in custody, so they need provision that is local, tailored to their needs and available outside the traditional academic calendar.

Thankfully, the number of young people committing crimes and receiving the last resort of a custodial sentence is falling.

Our job now is to work out how, together, we can cultivate a passion for the power of learning in the hearts and minds of every young offender.

Toni Fazaeli, chief executive, Institute for Learning, member of the Prisoner Learning Alliance

FE Week experts

Keeping the pressure on homophobia in a time of funding constraints

Pressure group Stonewall’s annual list of the top 100 lesbian, gay and bisexual-friendly employers included just three FE and skills-related institutions. Wanda Wyporska looks at what the sector can do, and is doing, to stamp out homophobia.

When austerity bites, equalities work is often seen as a luxury, and certainly cuts to the FE sector are biting, as colleges struggle to do ever more work with ever fewer resources.

However, promoting equality and diversity is at the very core of what colleges do, since they are at the heart of their varied communities.

Colleges are likely to have staff and students from the local communities and in turn, they provide a safe environment for often vulnerable students to not only reach their potential but also explore all sorts of issues.

We know from our members that homophobia, biphobia and transphobia all raise their ugly heads from time to time in various situations and locations.

The trade unions in the sector have equalities and legal experts who are happy to help and advise members as well as colleges, in working together to draft policies, agreements and develop good working practices.

The Association of Colleges and sector organisations negotiated the Joint Agreement on Guidance on Equality in Employment in FE Colleges, which is an excellent model policy.

However, despite lots of good practice in a

variety of areas, problems remain both in the classroom and the staffroom, which is why we support the Stonewall campaign highlighting homophobia in the workplace.

Yet the solution to tackling homophobia is relatively easy. Swift and effective action reassures lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people that homophobia is taken seriously by the college.

Celebrating LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) History Month each

“Swift and effective action reassures lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people that homophobia is taken seriously”

February, establishing an LGBT support group or network, and of course, good policies, regular training and effective monitoring, all play a part in creating an LGBT-friendly environment.

The ‘nothing about us, without us’ mantra is key here; there must be discussion with LGBT staff and students.



Luckily, in this digital age, there are many organisations and resources available.

The Forum for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Post-16 Education (www.sgforum.org.uk) has a variety of excellent resources on gender variance, the intersection between faith/religion and belief and sexual orientation, a gender identity equality e-resource and of course, the 12 steps to advancing sexual orientation and gender identity equality.

There is also help available from the Skills Funding Agency’s (SFA) Equality and Diversity Innovation Fund (EDI), managed by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (Niace).

Project Empower, a free one-hour e-learning tool developed by Doncaster Group Training Association and Pinnacle Training Solutions, has been used by more than 3,000 FE staff since its launch in 2011.

Huntingdonshire Regional College’s project, To Monitor Or Not, created an inclusive and tolerant environment in which lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender learners felt comfortable to share their personal experiences.

Monitoring is always a sensitive issue, and again there is advice on this from members of the forum on its website, both from the perspective of students and staff.

Monitoring for its own sake is a mere tick box exercise, what is important, is what adjustments are made as a result.

More challenging, perhaps, is work around transgender adults and the EDI is supporting Blackpool Council Adult and Community Learning, to develop a research project led by transgender adults. They aim to make the voice of transgender people heard in the development of adult and community learning and develop trans-friendly teaching and learning practices.

Undoubtedly there are areas of bad practice, there are people with prejudices in colleges, as there are in society at large.

However, most colleges are keen to support learners and staff, to maximise attainment, ensure equality of opportunity and to support and promote good relationships between those with protected characteristics and those without. As the Stonewall campaign says ‘Lots to do’.

Dr Wanda Wyporska, equalities officer, Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Organisation Profile: the Association of Business Executives (ABE)

If your college doesn’t already offer business-related qualifications, you want to expand your offer, or you want to recruit international students, then you can add ABE’s qualifications to your portfolio.

The Association of Business Executives (ABE) is recognised by Ofqual as a UK Awarding Organisation for qualifications. It offers Level 4, 5 and 6 Diploma qualifications in:

- Business Management (with optional pathways in the Management of Information Systems or Financial Management as well as Business Management)
- Human Resource Management
- Marketing Management, and
- Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Management

ABE also offers Level 7 Diploma in Business Management, and has recently launched a Level 4 Diploma in Business Start-up and Entrepreneurship. All ABE qualifications are on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

In addition, the Level 5 and Level 6 Diplomas for all programmes can be combined into a single Level 6 Extended Diploma qualification (so international students therefore only need the one visa).

ABE qualifications share many common units. This means that: (1) it is easier for you to

offer a range of programmes, which will help your recruitment, (2) you can have larger, and thus more economical, class sizes, and (3) students can easily take more than one qualification or switch courses.

ABE provides extensive tuition support to colleges including:

- Study manuals as PDFs on CD-ROM (which colleges can print and give or sell on to students)
- Past papers, specimen exam papers and mark schemes
- Examiners’ reports
- Lecture guides
- Study tips

More than 80 universities worldwide (45 in the UK) officially accept ABE qualifications for entry at different stages up to Masters/ MBA, and many more do so in practice, so you will be able to offer your students a clear progression to your local university.

While ABE has been offering qualifications in the UK since its creation, the organisation has recently appointed Paul Edsall as business development consultant for the UK, with a brief to specifically work with FE colleges. Paul has considerable experience of working with colleges, and will endeavour to provide you with the best possible options, support and advice.

ABE currently runs written examinations twice a year, every June and December,

but plans to introduce Centre Devised Assessments and Work Based Assessments in June 2014. These will enable your college to customise your offer to the local, and indeed international, market requirements. In addition, exemptions are offered for units from

many other Awarding Organisations.

The Association was founded in 1973, and celebrated its 40th anniversary last year in 2013. It is also a membership body, and so students (and lecturers) can become an Associate, Member and potentially Fellow of the Association. In addition to the post-nominal letters (AMABE, MABE and FABE respectively), these members receive Business Executive magazine, which reports on current issues across the business world, featuring articles by established businesspeople and authors. All members, including students, also receive Student Focus, a magazine produced to provide them with the latest developments at ABE, as well as study tips, feature articles, and other useful information.



ABE is well known and established in Commonwealth countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, with students studying in their home country or in the UK. There are now around 50,000 ABE students studying across a network of 300 colleges worldwide accredited to deliver its qualifications. If you would like to join them, please contact Paul Edsall on 07880 367655 , 020 8329 2948, or paule@abeuk.com.

FE Week campus round-up

sponsored by

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Matt James presenting The Great British Garden Revival

Pic: BBC/Outline Productionz

TV appearance plants seed of hope for shrubs

A college lecturer has 'shrubbed off' the competition to land a role as one of the presenters of a television show which aims to inspire viewers to save Britain's garden heritage.

Matt James, from Cornwall's Duchy College Rosewarne, is the shrub specialist on BBC Two show the Great British Garden Revival.

The series will feature episodes on cottage gardens, wildflowers, fruit trees, roof

gardens, and water features.

Matt was featured in an episode screened earlier this month, speaking about the history of shrubs and reasons for their decline in popularity.

He said: "Shrubs are vital to our gardens, yet in recent years their popularity has declined in-part due to the trend for naturalistic meadow-inspired planting. I hope this programme will highlight their importance."

A clean bill of health from the NHS boss



Rear, from left: Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt and head of biology Jason Rynn. Front from left: science students Daisy Middleton, Rachael Speed and Meghan Glue, all aged 17

NHS boss Jeremy Hunt gave Farnham Sixth Form College a clean bill of health after being shown around the site.

The Health Secretary, who is also South West Surrey's Tory MP, met principal Mike Potter and college director Jonathan Stewart during his visit.

Mr Hunt was full of praise for the college after being shown around its new music

technology studio, which cost £125,000 to build and opened in October last year. He was also shown around the biology and chemistry labs.

Mr Hunt said: "Speaking to Mike Potter about his aspirations, it is clear that at the heart of his vision lies his determination for every student to reach their potential."

Radiating enthusiasm after nuclear centre trip

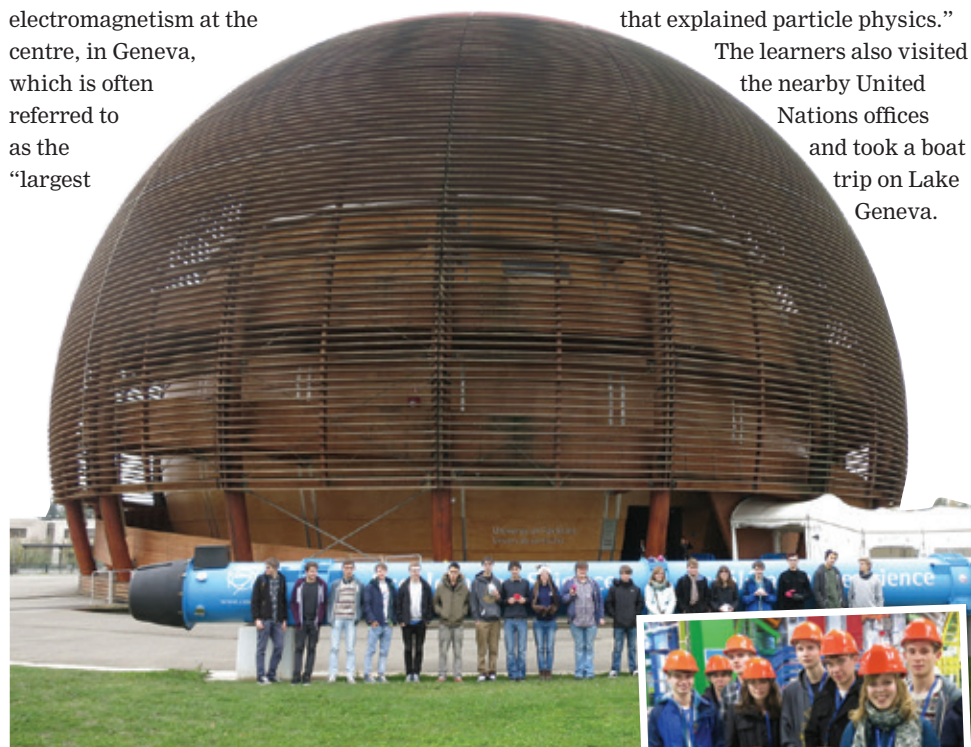
A group of students from Central Sussex College visited the swiss HQ of the European Organisation for Nuclear Research — home of the Large Hadron Collider.

BTec science, geography, biology, chemistry, physics and maths students learned about particle physics and electromagnetism at the centre, in Geneva, which is often referred to as the "largest

physics lab in the world".

Student Alice Sayers, aged 19, said: "We were impressed by the Universe of Particles — an exhibition [at the site] within a spherical building, built from recycled materials. Everything inside was spherical, and the pod-like chairs had speakers inside that explained particle physics."

The learners also visited the nearby United Nations offices and took a boat trip on Lake Geneva.



Central Sussex College students outside the Universe of Particles exhibition centre. Inset left: Students and college staff inside the European Organisation for Nuclear Research



Swashbuckling Howard is star of the Musketeers

A former Kingston College drama student is one of the stars of the latest television adaption of The Three Musketeers.

Howard Charles plays Porthos in the new big-budget BBC series, called The Musketeers, which is based on Alexandre Dumas' classic novel.

The 30-year-old former national diploma and degree drama student left Kingston College in 2005, but has spoken about the crucial role it played in launching his acting career.

He said: "Potential is nothing unless you learn how to harness and channel it into something creative, making it happen, and it was Kingston that made me realise that."

Carlos Santos, Howard's film and TV lecturer at the college, said: "He was always a hard-working and very positive student, but also had a good balance between life and work. With a good sense of humour, I am looking forward to seeing him as Porthos in this new role."

Peter Mayhew-Smith, college principal, said: "We're enormously proud to see a talented and able young actor like Howard Charles from Kingston College and into a major role such as this."



Howard Charles as Porthos and, inset, pictured recently out-of-character

Main image provided by BBC/Outline Productions

Send your stories with pictures to campus@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable

McAyla's Paralympics hopes after remarkable recovery

McAyla Johnston was left severely disabled after being hit by a car in 2008. But, since learning to walk and use her arms again, the Worcester College of Technology student has transformed herself into an elite athlete with hopes to compete in the 2016 Rio Paralympics, writes Paul Offord.

Teenager McAyla Johnston did not move a muscle when she woke up from a ten-day coma. She had suffered severe head injuries after being hit by a car while crossing a road in Worcester in 2008. Five years later and the 16-year-old excels at the javelin, shotput and discus to the extent that she harbours hopes of competing at the 2016 Rio Paralympics. "Competing in the Paralympics really would be a dream come true," she told *FE Week*. McAyla, who is studying a level two diploma in sports at Worcester College of Technology, had to relearn how to eat, drink, read, write and walk after her terrible injuries. And the lifelong sports fanatic noticed strength was returning faster to her upper body than legs, so decided to try out disabled athletics in 2009. She won gold in all three events in the under-16 cerebral palsy Sport National Championships four years later.

McAyla was allowed to compete in the competition as her walking difficulties are similar to those suffered by many people with cerebral palsy. She has now been selected for an elite training session at Loughborough University next month. It is organised by government agency Girls 4 Gold Disability Athletics, which aims to fast-track female athletes for Rio. McAyla said: "I probably wouldn't have believed it if someone had told me I would be in the running to go the Paralympics after I woke up from the coma. "When I first came round, I was aware of what was going on around me but couldn't talk or move. "It took two months before I took my first step. I started getting use back of my upper body at around the same time and it turned out my arms were stronger than my legs. "My arms have also been strengthened by things like pushing the wheels of my wheelchair around. "I have always been a confident person and that hasn't changed since the accident. I think that has helped me push myself with my recovery." And McAyla would not be worried about the national attention likely to come her way if she made it to the Paralympics, having already appeared on national television when she was presented the Daily Mirror's Pride of Britain Teenager



McAyla Johnston outside Worcester College of Technology. Inset right: McAyla receiving a signed LA Galaxy shirt from David Beckham after he presented her with the Pride of Britain Teenager of Courage award in 2011. Inset: McAyla holding the Olympic torch in 2012. Right: McAyla throwing a javelin



MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new and who's leaving

A former chief executive of the Scottish Funding Council and current university vice principal has been appointed to the governing board of Creative Skillset. Mark Batho takes up the post at the creative industries sector skills body in addition to his role at the University of Abertay, in Dundee. He was head of the Scottish Funding Council — which funds teaching and learning provision, research and other activities in Scotland's colleges, universities and other higher education institutions — for five years from 2008 and is a graduate of St Andrews University.



Between 2003 and 2008 he was director of lifelong learning for the Scottish Government, with overall responsibility for delivery of government policies on FE, skills and higher education. Mr Batho, who lives in Edinburgh, said: "I'm pleased to be joining the board and welcome the opportunity to contribute to the organisation. "Education, training and development are integral to the UK's creative sector remaining competitive in the global market. "Output from the creative sector is currently worth £36bn to the UK economy.

It's vital that we continue to deliver best-in-class products and services in the industries that make up the sector." Stewart Till CBE, chair of London-based Creative Skillset, said: "Mark's wealth of experience in higher education will be invaluable to us as we continue to support the UK's booming creative industries." Meanwhile, Marla Nelson has become Warwickshire College's director of enterprise and entrepreneurship. She is listed in the One World Action Top 100 Women: The Unseen Powerful Women Who Change The World (Business & Entrepreneur Category). Most recently she has been running her



own marketing and business development consultancy. She said: "I'm passionate about creating the conditions and opportunities for young people to become dynamic and innovative business leaders of the future; whether they become their own boss, or are working for somebody else. "I look forward to working with everyone to ensure the college not only meets its entrepreneurial college goals, but is an example of best practice in doing so."

NEW DIGITAL CAMPUS ROUND-UP



New Campus Round-up has now launched



So, your organisation has won an award, broken a record, had a famous visitor, raised money or awareness, and now you want to get your story published in *FE Week's* Campus Round-up. *FE Week* are always on the look out for your success stories. Here's our quick guide to getting your tale in our sparkling new publication.

The press release

All press releases should include a selection of quotes - ideally from staff, learners and others relevant to the story.

Include as much information as possible on the story - i.e. if money has been raised - how much? How many people attended? Less is not more - the more information, the happier we are and the more chance there is of getting the story published.

The story must be timely. If students raise money for Children In Need, its no good telling us when Comic Relief is round the corner. Tell us your story ASAP.

Be available to contact in case we require further details and that includes those featured in the release.

The picture

A high-res jpeg picture, with the following conditions, must accompany any submitted pieces.

- The picture must always include people relevant to the article and be free for us to use
- It should also have full details about those pictured, including students' names, ages and course details
- Where staff are pictured, we need to know who they are and what their job is
- These details are not required when it's a group of more than 10 - however,

pictures of large groups are less likely to appear in the paper

- Ideally, submit at least one portrait and one landscape picture
- Where a picture is taken by a student, we will happily give them a named credit where requested if their full details, as mentioned above, are included
- Pictures of people being handed cheques, standing shaking hands or holding awards are less favourable than active pictures
- For example, if a carpentry student has won an award, a picture of them in their workshop posing for the

camera as they show an interested principal how to chisel a piece of wood is much better than just holding an award

- If you've got a new building, get the architect outside it showing students and staff the plans/pointing out features. The same applies for renovations, old buildings, etc
- Make sure your picture is well lit. If it is too dark, it won't print well and may not be included
- Consider hiring a professional photographer or, better yet, if you have a photography course, get a learner to take the picture

Picture perfect

Not so picture perfect



Resolution too low



Don't photoshop your images



Image too dark



Don't crop the images before you send them

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FE Week is the only newspaper and website dedicated to the further education sector. Make sure that you are fully up to date with all the latest news throughout 2014 and subscribe today for only £50 (usually £75).
Subscribe before the end of January 2014 and receive £25 off.

Jobs

BISHOP AUCKLAND COLLEGE
IS SEEKING TO RECRUIT TO
THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

Bishop
Auckland
College

RS13/14/DIR/110
Learning Area Manager
Full time permanent position
Salary dependent upon experience/qualifications

Bishop Auckland College is seeking to recruit a dynamic, forward thinking individual who will be responsible for leading Maths and English across the College to Outstanding. We are looking for a highly professional committed practitioner with experience in teaching Maths and/or English.

We seek an inspirational, aspiring manager with a proven track record of raising standards in this key area. Either a Maths and/or English specialist, in addition to leading the delivery of outstanding learning, you will develop the provision, drive quality improvements, achieve efficient timetabling and oversee Lead IV arrangements. Your teaching qualification and current knowledge of relevant education policy, through understanding of the Ofsted agenda for Maths and English will support and drive improvement in student retention, achievement and success.

The post holder will be responsible for:

- leading the development of teaching and learning methodologies
- the improvement of student performance within the curriculum
- monitoring and review of Key Performance Indicators
- the day to day line management of a team of curriculum staff
- the effectiveness and efficiency of the use of human and physical resources within the curriculum area.

The successful candidate will have a level 3 qualification or equivalent in Maths and/or English, a teaching qualification and will have significant teaching experience, experience of course coordination, leading teams, experience of teaching on a range of courses and at different levels and experience of working with external organisations.

Lecturer Coordinator in Electrical (RS13/14/DIR/131)
Permanent position from April 2014 – 37 hours per week
Salary dependent upon experience/qualifications

The successful candidate will have a level 3 qualification in a relevant subject and a Certificate in Education (or be willing to work towards within 2 years). Applicants will also have 3 years experience in the industry, recent experience of teaching on a range of courses in FE or a training establishment and a recent grade 2 observation or above.

Motor Vehicle Vacancies

We are seeking highly motivated individuals who have experience and qualifications in Motor Vehicle technologies and aspire to play a key role at Bishop Auckland College within a fantastic, committed team on our journey to outstanding. The College has the following vacancies available:

Lecturer Coordinator in Motor Vehicle (RS13/14/DIR/129)
Permanent position from February 2014 – 37 hours per week.
Salary dependent upon experience/qualifications

The successful candidate will have a level 3 qualification in a relevant subject and a Certificate in Education (or be willing to work towards within 2 years). Applicants will also have 3 years experience in the industry, recent experience of teaching on a range of courses in FE or a training establishment and a recent grade 2 observation or above.

Part Time Teachers in Motor Vehicle (RS13/14/PT/190)
Temporary positions – from February 2014 until August 2014
Grade: £21.91 per hour (Un-Qualified), £23.23 per hour (Qualified)

The successful candidate will have a Level 3 qualification in a relevant subject area and a Certificate of Education (or be willing to work towards within 2 years.) Applicants will also have experience of teaching on a range of courses.

Learning Coach in Motor Vehicle (RS13/14/LC/29)
Temporary Position from February 2014 until June 2014
Teaching Staff Contract Grade: £15.01 (hourly rate includes annual leave entitlement).
The successful candidate will have a Level 3 qualification in the relevant vocational area and CTLLS qualification or be willing to work towards within 1 year. Applicants will also have knowledge and experience relating to working commercially within the specialist area.

If you wish to discuss the Motor Vehicle vacancies in further detail, please contact Learning Area Leader Sharron Tunstall on 01388 443058.



Queen Mary's College

Software Developer
Basingstoke

Queen Mary's College is at the heart of learning provision in Hampshire. It has a long-standing reputation as an excellent sixth form college and Ofsted deems it to be outstanding or good in every respect.

Set in a beautiful location on a 30 acre site, QMC is an attractive choice for students, staff and visitors with strong student numbers. Its success is founded on seeking to achieve excellence in every area and a commitment to raising the aspirations of all learners.

Ideally the successful candidate will be educated to degree level although this is not essential. Experience of developing software applications or working with relational databases is required.

Closing date Noon 10 February 2014

Salary - £25,328 - £30,940 per annum for a full-year post depending on qualifications and experience. Based on Points 33 – 39 of the Sixth Form College Support Staff salary scale.

Permanent 37 hours per week – the College will consider job share roles, term time only working as well as full-time full year contracts.

Job descriptions and application forms can be downloaded from our website or contact jobs@qmc.ac.uk

Alternatively you can telephone **Jo Renouf** on **01256 418303**

For further details and an application form please visit the College website www.bishopaucklandcollege.ac.uk email rachel.sowerby@bacoll.ac.uk or contact our 24 hour answering service on 01388 443108. Closing date for receipt of applications is: - Friday 31 January 2014 at 12 noon

Bishop Auckland College is committed to promoting diversity and equality of opportunity. The College has a Day Nursery open to the General Public, Students and Staff. Bishop Auckland College is committed to the safeguarding and welfare of all learners and any offer of employment will be subject to receipt of a satisfactory DBS disclosure.



Innovation Project Manager

£30,000 - 50,000

Permanent



The Reed NCFE Partnership

The REED NCFE Partnership is currently recruiting an Innovation Project Manager on a permanent basis to help us achieve our ambition that...

'Every year, we will help one million learners prepare for the transition from learning into work'

The focus of the role is to innovate, plan and project manage to ensure the successful development of products and services, primarily by outsourcing development work to a team of external contractors and suppliers. The role will be based at our new office in Longbenton, Newcastle upon Tyne.

If you want to be integral in growing, shaping and innovating REED NCFE then send your CV to **Matt Brown** matthewbrown@reed-ncfe.org.uk

The closing date for this vacancy is : Friday 7 February (midday)

For questions about this role please contact **Matt Brown, HR Officer on 0191 605 3304** or visit our website www.reed.ncfe.org.uk/careers

GENERAL MANAGER

Humbly Grove Engineering Training Association Ltd

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www.feweek.co.uk/jobs/view/general-manager/

Any further questions or to apply for the role please contact our executive search consultant **Joe Hansen** at Lime Search:

Closing date: 3rd March 2014

Phone: 020 3058 0672

Email: Joe.Hansen@lime-search.co.uk

**LCBT**courses
for
careers

LCBT is a Specialist Vocational College based in Central London. It was established in 1995 for Beauty, Retail, Holistic and related sectors and remains the largest Beauty Therapy College nationally, widely renowned within the Beauty Industry. LCBT has now expanded to offer a wide range of Employability Training, Apprenticeships and, a range of Health & Fitness and Teacher Training courses.

We have a number of Senior Management Team (SMT) roles that we are looking to recruit. Check out our website at <http://www.lcbt.co.uk/careers/> for further information on the below positions or regarding any other recruitment, or alternatively please send your CV to recruit@lcbt.co.uk or call us on **0207 208 1393**.

IT MANAGER

The IT Manager will ensure the streamlined operation of the IT Department in alignment with the College's business objectives. With full budgetary control, line-management responsibilities and management of the IT infrastructure of LCBT, this IT Manager will oversee all the IT related activities and operations of the College, as well as provide administrative direction and support for daily activities of the IT department.

HEAD OF MIS

The Head of MIS will possess a thorough understanding of the funding and grants procedures involved and ensure processes are in place to monitor, audit and control compliance with all aspects of the legislation. They will support and provide data collation as requested by the senior management team, responding to the needs of the Senior Management Team (SMT) and external funding providers.

APPRENTICESHIPS MANAGER

The Apprenticeships Manager will work with others inside and outside LCBT to create, develop, implement and maintain a viable Apprenticeship provision. The Apprenticeships Manager will ensure the department meets stringent targets that include enrolment, retention and success measures. The Apprenticeship provision serves a wide variety of different clients in varying sectors.

OUR ADDRESS LCBT, 47 GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET, LONDON. W1F 7JP

**Chief Executive
First4Skills****£140k**

First4Skills is one of the largest training providers in the UK, with strong knowledge and experience in ensuring that businesses right across the UK have access to a workforce with the right skills to improve their performance - now and into the future. Through advanced apprenticeships, vocational qualifications and everything in between, each year we're helping over 8,000 learners gain qualifications and make the most of their skills and reach their career potential.

We are now searching for a Chief Executive who will bring together best practice and innovation from the public and private sectors and who will be accountable for leading the successful performance of First4Skills. He/she will provide strong and dynamic leadership for First4Skills in fulfilling the mission of "Setting the standard in training". He/she will be accountable for driving new growth, leading new business opportunities, partnerships with the public and private sector and strong financial and quality KPIs.

The Chief Executive will play a leading role in the development and provision of the range of high quality and industry recognised qualifications and bespoke training interventions to help local, regional and national businesses to improve and develop overall performance. He/she will require an ability to create a fast paced environment that has effective processes that support an innovative culture, together with ensuring that staff have the capability and resources to deliver a high quality service portfolio to meet the future demands of the market.

If you are excited by the idea of strategically leading the First4Skills team of over 450 colleagues, you will be a self-motivated, lateral thinker with powerful communication skills and strong political persuasiveness. You will be able to generate ideas, motivate a committed team of professionals and develop fruitful relationships with internal and external stakeholders in the public and private sectors. Business acumen, commerciality and financial awareness are essential.

Further details and an application pack can be accessed under 'working at the college' 'vacancies' at: www.liv-coll.ac.uk where you can complete your application online. Closing Date: Midnight, 2nd February 2014

**Head of Faculty
Business & Computing****Salary : Circa £46,000**

MidKent College is a large and successful College operating on two main campuses serving Medway and Maidstone.

Following the retirement of the current post holder, MidKent College requires a committed, inspirational and enthusiastic leader for our newly created faculty of Business & Computing.

This is an exciting cross-College faculty to lead, with responsibility for shaping the future of our Business and Computing curriculum to meet the needs of industry and higher education. The faculty includes some Art and Media provision which offers the opportunity to develop the creative aspects of computing.

This is an ideal opportunity for a dynamic and progressive individual who would like the challenge of working in an ambitious College and the opportunity to lead a faculty with the potential to be at the cutting edge of curriculum development.

To apply for this position please contact job.applications@midkent.ac.uk for an application pack.

Closing Date Friday 7th February 2014, midday

Interviews will take place on Friday 21st February 2014



MidKent College is an equal opportunities employer

**MidKent College**



Activate Learning is a group which brings together secondary, further and higher education, along with workforce training, management consultancy, commercial businesses and social enterprise. At Activate Learning, we believe that education should inspire and develop the change-makers of the future, and to succeed we know that it must lead by example. Our purpose is to empower people to go further in learning and in life, by recognising their unique qualities and by providing an environment which builds confidence, raises aspirations and equips them to succeed. The continued demand for our courses together with a substantial growth in learner numbers drives us to invite applications from talented, experienced and qualified individuals to join us in the summer and autumn terms.



Banbury and Bicester College serves the north of Oxfordshire and beyond, providing leading-edge vocational programmes for all ages and levels. It has built an enviable reputation in hospitality and catering and the creative industries, offering career-focused courses in creative art and design, graphic design, fashion and photography from the recently-refurbished workshops and studios of the creative arts centre.



This autumn it will launch a new digital media production suite and motor vehicle centre in Banbury, following a £6m development.

- Access to HE
- Accounting
- Business Studies
- Construction and Built Environment
- English
- Health and Social Care
- Maths
- Mechanical Engineering
- Motor Vehicle
- Motorsport
- Retail and Allied Professions



City of Oxford College is the largest provider of further education and training in Oxfordshire and one of the leading colleges in the learning and skills sector. With high levels of learner achievement and significant investment in resources the college enjoys a prominent position in the centre of Oxford.



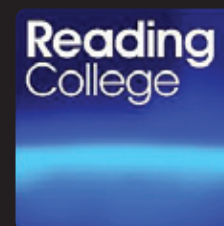
- Business Studies
- Electrical Installation
- English
- Foundation Studies
- Sports Coaching, Fitness and Rehabilitation
- Health and Social Care
- IT
- Music
- Maths



Reading College is a forward-thinking and thriving further education college located at the edge of Reading town centre. The college has built up a strong reputation amongst students, employers and other stakeholders for a drive to provide strong progression into employment, a commitment to respond to the needs of Reading and the local area, and consistently high professional standards.

With over 6,000 local learners on over 900 further education courses, Reading College plays a vital role in meeting the learning and training needs of local people and local businesses.

- Accounting
- Access to HE
- Business and IT
- Construction
- Engineering (including Civil Engineering)
- English
- Health and Social Care
- Humanities
- Maths
- Motor Vehicle



To apply online please visit the Activate Learning website at www.activatelearning.ac.uk

To discuss your career opportunities please contact:

- For Banbury and Bicester College vacancies please contact Nicky Albert on 01865 551706
- For City of Oxford College vacancies please contact Laura Honey on 01865 551904
- For Reading College vacancies please contact Laura Haines on 0118 955 4880



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FE Week Sudoku challenge

		3			9		
	2		1		6		4
	8			9			6
3			5	8	9		7
		5				8	
9			7	2	4		5
	3			7			2
	5		3		1		7
		1			3		

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play:
Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions:
Next week

			6				
	3	5		1			2
		2			5	9	8
		8		7			3
	4		1		2		7
2				6		1	
	2	3	7			8	
	7			3		4	1
				1			

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Last Week's solutions

1	6	9	5	8	2	3	7	4
2	8	4	7	3	9	5	6	1
3	7	5	1	4	6	8	9	2
5	1	8	3	2	7	9	4	6
6	3	7	4	9	1	2	5	8
4	9	2	6	5	8	1	3	7
7	5	6	2	1	3	4	8	9
8	4	1	9	6	5	7	2	3
9	2	3	8	7	4	6	1	5

Difficulty:
EASY

3	8	6	1	4	7	2	5	9
4	7	5	2	3	9	1	8	6
9	2	1	6	5	8	7	3	4
1	6	2	9	8	4	5	7	3
8	3	7	5	1	6	9	4	2
5	9	4	7	2	3	8	6	1
2	1	8	4	6	5	3	9	7
6	5	9	3	7	1	4	2	8
7	4	3	8	9	2	6	1	5

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference to WIN an FE Week mug!



Spot five differences. First entry wins an FE Week mug. Text your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to 07969 166 374.

Last week's spot the difference winner was Catherine Voyce, Loughborough College Corporation clerk.